

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TAGS: MPOL, CA

SUBJECT: OPPOSITION ADDRESS ON DEFENSE

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE DEFENSE CRITIC
ALLAN MCKINNON SPOKE IN COMMONS OCTOBER 10 DEALING
LARGELY WITH DEFENSE MATTERS. HE WAS SHARPLY
CRITICAL OF GOC FOR "LOADING ROLE ON TOP OF ROLE"
ON ARMED FORCES WHILE "THROTTLING" DEFENSE BUDGET--
BY INCREASING BUDGET ONLY 7 PERCENT IN TIME OF HIGH
INFLATION. HE DESCRIBED SEA, AIR, AND LAND FORCES
EQUIPMENT AS EITHER OBSOLETE OR UNSUITED TO ASSIGNED
TASKS, AND CALLED GOC DEFENSE PERFORMANCE UNSATISFACTORY
COMPARED WITH OTHER NATO MEMBERS. END SUMMARY.

2. MCKINNON NOTED CANADA IS NEXT TO LAST OF 13 NATO
NATIONS IN PERCENT OF GNP FOR DEFENSE; HAS LESS MEN
PER CAPITA IN ARMED FORCES THAN ANY EUROPEAN
NATO OR WARSAW PACT NATION; AND SPENDS ALMOST
90 PERCENT OF DEFENSE BUDGET ON PAY AND ALLOWANCES,
THUS RESTRICTING EXPENDITURES FOR CAPITAL EQUIPMENT.
WITHOUT PREJUDGING ISSUES INVOLVED, HE CALLED FOR
STUDY OF CANADIAN ROLE IN NORAD, AND CANADIAN
POSITION ON ACCEPTING ATOMIC WEAPONS.

3. MCKINNON SAID TASK FOR NAVAL FORCES IN FUTURE
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LIKELY BE PRESERVATION OF SOVEREIGNTY IN COASTAL

WATERS RATHER THAN ASW, AND THAT DDH-280 DESTROYERS TOO EXPENSIVE AND ILL-FITTED FOR THIS ROLE, SUGGESTING SMALL GUNBOATS WOULD BE MORE APPROPRIATE.

4. REGARDING AIR ELEMENT MCKINNON DESCRIBED GOC MILITARY AIRCRAFT AS UNSUITED TO ASSIGNED ROLES. HE DOUBTED GOC READINESS TO PROCURE LONG RANGE PATROL AIR CRAFT TO REPLACE ARGUS AND DESCRIBED POSSIBLE SUCCESSORS AS "LAST OF PRODUCTION RUN FROM AMERICAN FACTORY".

5. MCKINNON CITED ARLIER GOC PROMISES TO PROCURE NEW TANKS AND NOTED ARMORED FORCES NOW EQUIPPED WITH 30 CENTURION TANKS OF 1946 VINTAGE.

6. PRAISING "PROFESSIONALISM AND EXPERTISE" OF CANADIAN FORCES, MCKINNON SAID DETERIORATING EQUIPMENT AND POSSIBLE PERSONNEL CUTS HAD RESULTED IN LOW MORALE, AND THAT FURTHER BUDGETARY RESTRICTIONS WOULD DO SERIOUS HARM.

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